United Nations A/56/PV.82

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

82nd plenary meeting
Monday, 10 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 33

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/413)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.41)

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): Croatia is a country with a rich cultural heritage. Situated at the crossroads of different cultural influences, its culture has been constantly enriched. However, due to the turbulent political events and conflicts in the region, Croatia has often fallen victim to the appropriation of its cultural property. Consequently, the issue of the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin is of utmost importance to my delegation.

We commend the valuable work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in this field, especially that of its Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. We are pleased that Croatia was recently elected to that Committee.

A large number of UNESCO member States are exposed to illicit export and trafficking in cultural artefacts, thus being deprived of their historical identity and traditions. It has to be emphasized that the effective fight against this crime against national heritage can be achieved only through cooperation, solidarity and organized initiatives at the international level. Croatia will spare no effort to work together with the other members of the Committee, as well as with other member States of UNESCO, in this regard.

In our last speech on this subject, two years ago, we informed the General Assembly about the grave consequences Croatia's cultural property suffered during aggression and occupation in the 1990s. I could illustrate this simply with just one sentence. According to independent foreign reports, more cultural artefacts were destroyed in Croatia during the first seven months of war in 1991 and 1992 than during the entire duration of the Second World War. We have also informed the Assembly of cultural property taken away from Vukovar and the Dubrovnik area, and we have demanded its return.

After almost 10 years of being deprived of a significant part of our cultural heritage, we are glad to inform the General Assembly that bilateral negotiations with the new Government in Belgrade have been successfully concluded and that cultural property taken away should be immediately returned to where it belongs — to Vukovar and to the other parts of Croatia.

As an attractive tourist destination with a rich natural and cultural heritage, Croatia is very vulnerable

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-68568 (E)

to the loss of its cultural heritage in times of peace as well. Therefore, we welcome the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage and are highly interested in joining international initiatives for combating illicit trafficking in cultural property.

The beauty of this world is in its diversity. We live in different countries, speak different languages, have different customs and enjoy different cultures. It is exactly this diverse global heritage, which we should all admire and learn about, that connects us and enriches us all. That is also why the protection of cultural property should be our common task.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): I am making this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Cyprus, Ambassador Zackheos.

The issue of the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin constitutes an area in which international relations are put to a test — a noble test — to ensure that cooperation among State and non-state actors can positively affect the lofty goal of protecting the cultural heritage of mankind.

My delegation attaches particular importance to this issue and to the efforts of the United Nations in general, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in particular, for the considerable work that is being done in this direction. In this respect, we welcome the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/55/413, as well as the 10 recommendations contained in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the action taken by the organization on the return and restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin.

Since our last discussion on this item before this body, the recommendations adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation at its eleventh session, held in Phnom Penh this year, constitute a positive development that we warmly welcome.

Another development was the creation by UNESCO of the International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. We also welcome the adoption by the General Conference of UNESCO of an International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property as an important international voluntary standard for professionals.

Cyprus, as a State party to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954 and a signatory of its Second Protocol, adopted in 1999, follows with interest the work undertaken to address the illicit sale of cultural objects on the Internet and the need for Member States to adopt appropriate international legislation in the field.

The combating of illicit trafficking in cultural property is a task that requires perseverance and multifaceted collaborative efforts. One of the major areas in this direction is the promotion of international documentation for recording data of cultural property and the dissemination of information in order to assist in its recovery. Cyprus supports all efforts in this regard, including the establishment of the UNESCO online network that will include a regularly updated inventory of stolen cultural artefacts, including those removed illegally from areas of conflict and occupied territories.

Cyprus also supports the view that, in order to halt illicit trafficking, Member States should ensure that officials of customs and border control services are fully trained in their duties to apply the rules of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970 and to report any cases of illicit activity to the appropriate authorities of the State party concerned.

My country's 9,000 years of recorded civilization have left us with an immense cultural heritage that we have an obligation to protect and bequeath to future generations. By virtue of its geographical position at the crossroads of three continents and many civilizations, Cyprus's cultural heritage has, through the millennia, been continuously enriched and provides a unique insight into the many civilizations that have existed on the island during its long and eventful history. Many of the artefacts of this rich cultural history can be viewed in museums throughout the world. Many more, unfortunately, have become the objects of illicit trafficking, especially those removed illegally from the territory of the island under foreign occupation since 1974.

The plundering of the cultural heritage of Cyprus in this area has been so widespread that it led to a

decision by the United States, which we warmly welcome, to impose in April 1999 an emergency import restriction on Byzantine ecclesiastical and ritual ethnological material from Cyprus unless such material is accompanied by an export permit issued by the Government of Cyprus. Our determination to investigate the fate and to pursue the return of every illegally removed object of our cultural heritage to its rightful owner is unshakeable. We look to the international community to extend its solidarity and support in our effort to protect an invaluable part of the cultural heritage of humanity.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The international community has laid down specific rules within international law to protect and return cultural property to the countries of origin. There are many international conventions and agreements on this issue, such as the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Property.

It is indeed gratifying to note the increased international attention to the return of cultural property to the people and nations that are its rightful owners, as it is part of their history and a reflection of their ancient civilizations. My delegation wishes to commend the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), for encouraging bilateral negotiations on the return of such property, the establishment of inventories of it and the limiting of illicit trafficking in it.

While we welcome the UNESCO Director-General's establishment of the International Fund for the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, which is an important instrument in the use of Object-ID and the training of museum experts, we believe that this important issue calls for further efforts, especially in the fields of information exchange; raising awareness and education, especially among the young; and the establishment of comprehensive inventories of cultural property stolen from its proper owners.

Libya, like many other countries, has suffered extensive pillaging of its cultural heritage. Indeed, the conditions that the colonialists imposed on the Libyan people opened the door to the organized and systematic theft of major elements of Libyan civilization, dating back to ancient times. Visitors to museums and other cultural centres in Europe and America can attest to the artefacts, manuscripts and handicrafts that remain as evidence of the refined tastes of Libyans who left behind them a rich and wonderful heritage.

Colonialism has scattered some of these treasures and buried others in vaults of antiquities. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, hundreds of sculptures were stolen from the historic city of Shihat in eastern Libya, along with dozens of pottery wares and tablets telling the history of the city, and thousands of rare coins made of precious metals. Historical sources tell of dozens of fine columns and galleries that were taken from Leptis Magna in western Libya and are now in Britain, adorning the garden of one of its royal palaces. The same sources describe dozens of marble columns and smaller artefacts transported out of the same city by a European. A different European took from Benghazi more than 600 prehistoric objects that are now in European museums.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/413 details the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation. The Committee calls on Member States to ensure the implementation of the rules of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and urges the competent authorities of the States parties concerned to fully implement this Convention. The Committee has also called on UNESCO to support, by all available means, the efforts of Member States to establish inventories of their cultural heritage to improve its preservation at the national level, as well as to improve the circulation of information concerning theft of such property.

While my delegation appreciates and commends these efforts, it notes that progress remains limited. We are concerned that the majority of the countries that have acquired cultural treasures have not shown any serious intention of taking measures to implement the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under

this item, which the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was among the first to seek to include in the agenda of this session, consistent with the importance it attaches to the return of cultural property to the countries of origin.

Moreover, most of the countries that hold the cultural property of others still refuse to join the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which was concluded more than 30 years ago. This reveals that the views and ideas of those who claim to be the leaders of modern civilization and guardians of human heritage are still hostage to a past that witnessed the theft of others' property, including their cultural heritage.

My country has a rich cultural heritage that we remain committed to recover, including our manuscripts, artefacts, jewellery and other works of art. We hope that the countries holding this property, which they acquired unlawfully, by theft, will help in returning it without delay or procrastination. To do otherwise would be to ignore the resolutions of the General Assembly. We cannot keep silent regarding our stolen property and we will do everything possible to recover those treasures. They are the symbol of our past and identity, and we will not forget that.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): The issue of cooperation between States in the sphere of return or restitution of cultural property is becoming increasingly important in terms of ensuring the safety of the cultural space. Appeals for preservation of the collective memory embodied in historic and cultural achievements, and calls for the application of collective experience and intellect in our efforts to deal with this problem, are becoming stronger and stronger. No one can doubt that cultural treasures are the key element in communication, mutual understanding and rapprochement between peoples and between States.

Ukraine attaches great significance to finding practical solutions to the persistent and complex problems that hinder the restitution to the countries of origin of stolen or illicitly removed cultural property. Numerous valuable pieces of our cultural property have been removed from the territory of Ukraine and dispersed throughout the world, inaccessible to my country and subtracted from its scientific and cultural life.

Our country is developing international cooperation at both the bilateral and multilateral levels and is open to constructive dialogue with all interested parties in this respect. We proceed from the understanding that the return of cultural property to the countries of origin is a delicate problem politically, legally and ethically. That is why we are prepared to address each case appropriately and carefully, with due regard for the conditions under which masterpieces were removed from our country.

We believe that the solution to these problems should be based only on international law. Ukraine has ratified a number of international instruments, including the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972; and the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. We are convinced that these important legal instruments are a solid foundation for the protection of cultural treasures for future generations.

I would also like to emphasize that an active policy on the protection of cultural heritage is one of the high priorities of the Ukrainian Government, which recently adopted the State programmes "Return to Ukraine" and "Cultural Treasures of Ukraine", aimed at the systematizing of activities aimed at the restitution of our historic cultural heritage. These projects envision wide cooperation with foreign partners. In Ukraine, we have also established a State service for control over the transferring of cultural treasures across the State border.

In our view, a coordinated international approach to the problem of the return of cultural property to the countries of origin and of the reduction of the effects of its illicit trafficking should become a significant component of the global strategy of the United Nations.

In this regard, my delegation attaches particular importance to the efforts of the United Nations in general — and of UNESCO in particular — for the considerable work that has been done in this regard. We note with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General submitted in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, which provides a helpful account of the work done by UNESCO in promoting bilateral

negotiations for the return or restitution of cultural property as a matter of cultural continuity and justice; of the preparation of inventories of movable cultural property; and of the dissemination of information to the public in this field. We welcome the recommendations contained in the report.

My delegation understands that it is our moral obligation to work tirelessly to protect the historical and cultural values of human civilization. We owe this to both past and future generations.

In this regard, we welcome the proclamation of 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. Ukraine would like to thank the delegation of Greece for its leadership in preparing the draft resolution on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, which represents a good basis for the development of cooperation among Member States in this area. We are pleased to sponsor and support this draft resolution and look forward to future progress in its implementation.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The States Members of the United Nations have underlined, through the resolutions of the General Assembly, that cultural properties are an important intellectual and cultural asset of each and every country, and that therefore they should be safeguarded and returned to the countries of origin in the event of their illegal transfer.

A country's national cultural heritage, created over time, is imbued with the nation's wisdom and ingenuity and reflects the history of its development. Preserving a nation's cultural heritage is significant in that this allows its people to inherit and develop a cultural tradition, thus instilling in them national pride and confidence.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations are rendering technical assistance to the work of Member countries in registering cultural properties and in recovering and preserving them.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the activities of UNESCO and of other relevant organizations for recovering and preserving cultural properties.

Our country is abundant in cultural properties, as its history spans 5,000 years. From the very beginning of human civilization, our nation has had its own, indigenous culture and thereby contributed to the development of culture and science. As early as the seventh century, we engaged in astronomical observation for meteorological study and used metal print.

There are many cultural properties in our country, including royal tombs, temples, stone pagodas, paintings, calligraphic works and folk artefacts, all reflecting the history of the nation's development and its national wisdom.

Many of these valuable cultural properties, however, were damaged or lost during the aggression by, and the colonial rule of, Japan. Japan plundered and destroyed many of the cultural properties forming our national treasure.

In order to extinguish the Korean nation, Japan prohibited the teaching of the Korean language and history and forcibly confiscated and burned history, geography and other books. It also ravaged cultural properties such as monuments and architecturally significant buildings, which could give rise to national sentiments on the part of the Korean people.

The number and value of the cultural properties confiscated by Japan during its 40-year-long colonial domination over Korea are incalculable. However, Japan has not yet recognized its past crimes; rather, it distorts the history of its aggression against Korea and other Asian countries. Japan must return the cultural properties it has taken from Korea and duly compensate it for the property it has destroyed.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made major efforts to preserve national cultural relics. The recovery of historical relics and the preservation of cultural properties will enable new generations to better know the history of their nations and will imbue them with the spirit of national independence by enabling them to inherit and develop their cultural tradition.

In my country, we have restored to their original state the tomb of Tangun, the founding father of Korea, and the tomb of Tongmyong. We have rehabilitated old tombs that had been damaged, and we have preserved cultural properties that include mural paintings in such tombs.

We are cooperating fully with UNESCO in its efforts to preserve cultural property. We will further

contribute to enriching the treasure house of humankind by continuously recovering and preserving historical relics.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country deems it highly important for us to address the question of the return of cultural properties to their countries of origin or their restitution in case of illicit appropriation, as this issue is very closely connected to the rights of peoples to preserve their cultural roots and heritage.

The international community has become increasingly aware of the rights of peoples to recover and preserve their cultural property, and this growing awareness has been the catalyst for the efforts of the international community, through the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and through the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Finally, the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects was adopted in 1995 and came into effect in 1998.

Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Our country is situated at a crossroads — a meeting place for different civilizations and cultures. This interaction has produced a unique human tapestry that has given the world a trove of treasures, antiquities and works of art of inestimable value — milestones marking the long course of Egyptian civilization over the ages. We believe that only the children of that Egyptian civilization can safeguard such treasures. Many Egyptian antiquities have unfortunately been removed from the country over a period of many years. Were it not for the artistic abundance of our civilization and the new discoveries that are made on a daily basis, very little would remain of that cultural property and all of those works of art, given the organized theft and intensive illicit trafficking that has taken place over the years.

Egypt has worked very hard to recover the cultural property that has been removed from the country illegally. We have entered into bilateral and multilateral dialogue with the countries where the property is currently located. Despite the positive results that have been reached in certain areas, we are still very far from our goal. We would like to pay special tribute to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for its role in this connection. The Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation has done commendable work. We welcome the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its eleventh session, in Cambodia last March.

We would like to stress that it is necessary for both States and individuals to respect the international legal regime that governs these issues. Furthermore, all countries must abide by their moral and legal responsibilities. In this connection, we welcome the adoption in 2000 of the International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property. We call upon the international community to continue to work to ensure that all museums, dealers and relevant cultural and trade institutions respect that Code. We would like to emphasize that States are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the International Code of Ethics; governmental cultural institutions must respect the rules and principles laid down therein.

The restitution of cultural property has taken on new impetus because of the proclamation of 2002 as the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for international activities to be undertaken that will make it possible for the works of art and cultural property — particularly those that have been illicitly transported — of all peoples throughout the world to be recovered and returned to the countries of origin. Egypt supports efforts to restore such cultural property and appeals to all countries that have Egyptian cultural property that has been illicitly transported to cooperate with us in this connection. There can be no doubt that this just cause is a true test of the international community's respect for the rule of law and the good governance that are referred to so often in international forums and declarations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. I should like to inform members that, at the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/56/L.41 will be taken at a later date.

Agenda item 18

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples on its work during 2001 (A/56/23 (Parts I-III))

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/61, A/56/65, A/56/159)

Draft resolutions (A/56/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. G, para. 7; A/56/L.40)

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoué of Côte d'Ivoire, Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, to introduce the Committee's report and draft resolution A/56/L.40.

Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me, as representative of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to speak in the General Assembly in my capacity as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee, to provide a brief review of the Committee's work as the Assembly considers the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In the absence of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee, Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, I also have the honour to introduce the report of the Special Committee on its work during 2001, as contained in document A/56/23.

The report is divided into three parts, with the recommendations for action being presented in part III. Part I describes the establishment, organization and activities of the Committee, its relations with United Nations bodies and intergovernmental, non-governmental and regional organizations, and its activities relating to international conventions.

I wish, in particular, to draw the Assembly's attention to section J of chapter I of part I, which outlines the future programme of work the Committee intends to undertake during 2002, subject to the approval of the General Assembly. Part I of the report also deals with the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In addition, it contains the report of the Caribbean Regional Seminar held in Havana, Cuba, in May 2001.

Part II of the report presents a brief account of the Committee's deliberations regarding the substantive issues on its agenda. Those include the dissemination of information on decolonization, the question of sending visiting missions to Territories, economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, military activities carried out by administering Powers in Territories under their administration, and the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations. Part II also includes chapters related to the information transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter and chapters dealing with Territories.

As I mentioned earlier, all the recommendations of the Special Committee can be found in part III of the report.

The report before the Assembly describes the work carried out by the Special Committee in the implementation of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. I would now like to highlight some of the activities of the last year.

Unfortunately, despite the progress made since the adoption of the 1960 Declaration, the process of decolonization is still incomplete. Therefore, our deliberations during this first year of the Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism have again been focused essentially on the political, economic and social situation prevailing in the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. We have reviewed the information provided by the administering Powers in accordance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter, as well as the working papers on each Territory prepared by the Secretariat. We also heard statements made by representatives of the Territories, petitioners, other senior officials and non-governmental organizations.

The Committee held 10 formal meetings, five informal meetings and numerous consultations in order to reach consensus on the issues before it. At the end of our session, we adopted 10 draft resolutions by consensus, including one on the Falklands Islands

(Malvinas) and one on Puerto Rico and one decision on military activities and arrangements. We also continued to point out the need for close collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Special Committee regarding international assistance to the Territories. At Geneva last July, the Economic and Social Council adopted a draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies.

We were very encouraged by the record number of participants from the Territories that attended the Caribbean Regional Seminar held in Cuba in May. The Committee took the opportunity to hear the concerns of the participants and to inform them about its work, particularly its desire to engage the administering Powers in developing decolonization plans through work programmes for the individual Territories concerned. We emphasized that the views of the peoples of the territories must be fully taken into account in any future decolonization work programmes. The Committee has repeatedly stressed that the cooperation of the administering Powers is essential for the Committee to make progress in its work.

During 2001, we continued to enjoy the constructive cooperation of New Zealand. We are pleased that representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States also attended some of our meetings, albeit informally, and that, for the first time, the United Kingdom officially attended our Regional Seminar in Havana. France attended meetings devoted to New Caledonia, and Portugal, the former administering Power in East Timor, also attended meetings of the Committee. We hope that our working relationship with all the administering Powers will be further strengthened to allow for real progress in the consideration of the Territories' needs and aspirations.

In that regard, the meetings held in June by the members of the Committee with the representatives of New Zealand and Tokelau were very instructive. We discussed the best way to work in partnership to ensure that any eventual plan for self-determination would reflect faithfully the wishes of the people regarding their future political status and living conditions. We look forward to our future meetings on this issue. Experience has also shown how the case-by-case work programmes for decolonization can be a useful tool when we have the cooperation and good will of all parties involved.

Encouraged by our meetings on Tokelau, we look forward to greater involvement in the work of the Committee by all the administering Powers informally or, preferably, formally. In that regard, we are still awaiting the responses of the United Kingdom and the United States on how to proceed together with the informal dialogue begun over a year ago on Pitcairn and American Samoa. Again, we must stress that any decolonization process must include representatives of the Territories at every stage. We hope that the administering Powers will seize the opportunity before them to make progress in the Committee's work, to the benefit of all partners. A process as complex as decolonization undoubtedly requires consistent efforts by all concerned if we expect to obtain the desired results.

The elections for a Constituent Assembly held this year in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor provide cause for encouragement. The Committee commends the people of East Timor for the civic-mindedness they have resolutely displayed throughout the process that is taking East Timor towards independence. We also applaud the valuable contribution of the United Nations and the international community at large for the progress made in the Territory.

I now wish to introduce, for the Assembly's consideration and approval, a draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in document A/56/L.40.

The draft resolution before us closely follows the text of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its last session. Bearing in mind the declaration of a Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the text reaffirms once again that the existence of colonialism is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; it also reaffirms the General Assembly's determination to continue to take all steps necessary to bring about the complete and speedy eradication of colonialism.

In the draft resolution, the General Assembly affirms once again its support for the aspirations of the peoples under colonial rule to exercise their right to self-determination, including independence, in

accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization. It calls upon the administering Powers to finalize before the end of 2002 a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee and the relevant resolutions on decolonization, including resolutions on specific Territories.

In that context, the draft resolution contains a new element, appearing in operative paragraph 7, in which the General Assembly welcomes the ongoing consultations between the Special Committee and New Zealand, as administering Power for Tokelau, with the participation of representatives of the people of Tokelau, with a view to formulating a programme of work on the question of Tokelau.

Operative paragraph 8 contains several provisions concerning the Special Committee's programme of work. In it, the Assembly requests the Special Committee to formulate specific proposals to bring about an end to colonialism, to examine the implementation by Member States of relevant resolutions, to continue to pay special attention to the small Territories, including through the dispatch of visiting missions, to finalize before the end of 2002 a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for each Territory, to enlist worldwide support for decolonization, to conduct seminars, and to observe annually the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The draft resolution also contains paragraphs specifically concerning economic activities, the exploitation of natural resources and military activities and arrangements in the Territories.

The draft resolution urges all States and specialized agencies to provide moral and material assistance to the Territories and requests that the administering Powers make use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economies of those Territories.

The draft resolution reaffirms that visiting missions are an effective means of ascertaining the situation in the Territories. It therefore calls upon the administering Powers to continue to facilitate visiting missions and upon those that have not participated formally in the work of the Special Committee to do so at its session in 2002.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to provide economic, social and other assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to continue to do so, as appropriate, after they exercise their right to self-determination, including independence.

The text of the draft resolution before the Assembly is the fruit of transparent consultations carried out in a spirit of cooperation with interested delegations with a view to achieving consensus. I urge all delegations to the General Assembly to welcome the recommendations submitted by the Special Committee so that we may proceed with our work of promoting the rights and interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Before concluding, on behalf of all the members of the Special Committee, I wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the effective technical and substantive support of the Secretariat throughout the session. I also wish to thank my colleagues on the Bureau of the Committee — Vice-Chairman Ambassador Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla of Cuba and Rapporteur Mr. Fayssal Mekdad of the Syrian Arab Republic — for their cooperation and support while I was working as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee. Naturally, I also wish to thank all the members of the Special Committee for their dynamic cooperation.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that the General Assembly will take action on the two draft resolutions under agenda item 18 after all reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) have been considered.

Reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on agenda items 85 to 91, 92 and 18, 93 and 12, 94 as well as 18.

I request the Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, Mr. Graham Maitland of South Africa, to introduce in one intervention the

reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Mr. Maitland (South Africa), Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee): It is a privilege and a great personal honour for me to introduce to the General Assembly the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on agenda items 85 to 94, as well as items 12 and 18. These reports, contained in documents A/56/547 to A/56/557, include the texts of draft resolutions and decisions recommended to the General Assembly for adoption.

The Fourth Committee considered all the items allocated to it separately, with the exception of matters pertaining to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and related issues, which were considered in one cluster and on which one single general debate was held.

Throughout its session, during the first part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee had a total of 22 formal meetings. An informal interactive meeting was held under agenda item 89, "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects". An open-ended working group established by the Committee under item 86, "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", also held several informal meetings.

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted 24 draft resolutions and 3 draft decisions, of which 9 draft resolutions and 3 draft decisions were adopted without a vote.

The first report, submitted under agenda item 85, "Effects of atomic radiation", is contained in document A/56/547. The Fourth Committee considered the 2001 report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), which prepared the report and its scientific annex during its forty-fourth and fiftieth sessions. The draft resolution submitted under this agenda item is contained in paragraph 7 of the report. In the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, among other things, commend UNSCEAR for the valuable contribution it has been making in the course of the past 46 years, since its inception, to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation; endorse the intentions and plans of UNSCEAR for its future activities of scientific review; and invite UNSCEAR to continue its consultations with scientists and experts from interested Member States in the process of preparing its future scientific reports. On behalf of the Fourth Committee, I recommend the adoption of this draft resolution by the General Assembly.

The second report, submitted under agenda item 86, entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", is contained in document A/56/548. During its consideration of the item, the Fourth Committee had an open-ended working group which held a number of informal meetings, under the chairmanship of the delegation of Chile, to formulate the draft resolution contained in paragraph 10 of the report. In that draft resolution, the General Assembly would, among other things, endorse the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee; follow up on the implementation of recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space — UNISPACE III — and decide that the practice of sharing seats on the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on a rotating basis between Cuba and Peru as well as between the Republic of Korea and Malaysia should be terminated, that those four countries should become full members of the Committee, and that Saudi Arabia and Slovakia should become members of the same Committee. On behalf of the Fourth Committee, I recommend this draft resolution to the Assembly for adoption.

The third report, submitted under agenda item 87, entitled "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East", is contained in document A/56/549. The Fourth Committee adopted seven draft resolutions related to various aspects of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and they are contained in paragraph 22 of the report. The Fourth Committee recommends the adoption of these draft resolutions to the Assembly.

The fourth report, submitted under agenda item 88, entitled "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories", is contained in document A/56/550. The Fourth Committee considered the report of the Special Committee concerning the protection and promotion of the human rights of the Palestinian

people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories. Throughout the debate on this item, the activities of the Special Committee were widely supported and appreciated by many States. Under this item, the Fourth Committee adopted five draft resolutions, which can be found in paragraph 22 of its report. The Committee recommends these draft resolutions to the Assembly for adoption.

The fifth report, relating to agenda item 89, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects", is contained in document A/56/551. The Fourth Committee heard a comprehensive introductory statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and held a general debate under this item. It also held informal interactive discussions with the Under-Secretary-General and other senior officials of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. No proposal was submitted to the Committee under this agenda item at this stage of its work.

The sixth report, submitted under agenda item 90, entitled "Questions relating to information", is contained in document A/56/552. After hearing a comprehensive introductory statement by the Interim Head of the Department of Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Fourth Committee considered the report submitted by the Committee on Information. The Fourth Committee adopted, without a vote, two draft resolutions and one decision, which are contained, respectively, in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the present report. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee thus recommends that the General Assembly adopt both draft resolutions and the draft decision.

With regard to the cluster of items on Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples — agenda items 91, 92, 93, 12, 94 and 18 — the Fourth Committee considered these items together. Under these items, the Assembly has before it a number of reports.

The report submitted under agenda item 91, entitled "Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations", is contained in document A/56/553. The draft resolution on this item appears in paragraph 7 of the report. The Fourth Committee recommends it to the Assembly for adoption.

The report relating to agenda items 92 and 18, entitled "Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories" and "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", is contained in document A/56/554. Under these two items, the Fourth Committee adopted one draft resolution and one draft decision on "Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration", which are contained, respectively, in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the report. The Committee recommends this draft resolution and the decision to the Assembly for adoption.

The report relating to agenda items 93 and 12, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations" and "Report of the Economic and Social Council", is contained in document A/56/555. In paragraph 7 of the report, the Fourth Committee recommends one draft resolution to the Assembly for adoption.

The report relating to agenda item 94, entitled "Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories", is contained in document A/56/556. Under this item, the Fourth Committee recommends one draft resolution, which is contained in paragraph 6 of the report, for adoption by the Assembly.

The report submitted under agenda item 18, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", is contained in document A/56/557, which contains chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to specific Territories not covered by other agenda items. In this context, the Fourth Committee adopted four draft resolutions, one of which covers 11 Territories, and one draft decision. The draft resolutions on the question of Western Sahara, the question of New Caledonia and the question of Tokelau, the consolidated omnibus draft resolution

concerning the 11 Territories and the draft decision on the question of Gibraltar were adopted without a vote. These draft resolutions are contained in paragraph 20 of the report. The Fourth Committee recommends that the Assembly adopt these draft resolutions.

In addition to these reports, I should like to inform the Assembly that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee decided at this session to adopt a methodology for the selection of its Bureau for both this session and future sessions of the Assembly. Since a precedent already exists for a Main Committee to arrive at a methodology for selection of its Bureau — namely, that chosen by the First Committee — the Committee decided, on the proposal of its Chairman, to adopt a system of rotation for the posts of Chair, three Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur based on the English alphabetical order of the regional groups.

Under this rotational method, and because the Chair this year was from Asia, the three Vice Chairs this year were from the regional groups of the Eastern European States, the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Western European and other States, while the Rapporteur was from the regional group of African States.

Before concluding, I should like to stress the high level of cooperation prevailing in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. This enabled it to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Assembly and to complete its work effectively and constructively despite the time constraints occasioned by the changes in the Assembly's schedule of work.

I should like to express, on behalf of the Bureau of the Fourth Committee, our profound appreciation to those delegations that coordinated the draft resolutions adopted by the Committee. I should also like to thank all delegations that participated in our efforts to reach consensus on many resolutions and decisions. When this was not possible, their cooperation helped the Bureau to narrow the differences among interested parties. All such contributions were made in a spirit of cooperation which greatly facilitated our deliberations on a number of sensitive issues.

I should like to pay particular tribute here to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, Ambassador Hasmy Agam of Malaysia, whose vast knowledge and experience, enhanced by his consummate diplomatic skills, enabled the Committee to consider in depth all the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly. This was particularly important given the wide-ranging and often difficult issues assigned to the Committee. The Vice-Chairpersons — Mrs. Alexandrina Rusu of Romania, Mr. Cristián Streeter of Chile and Ms. Anna-Maija Korpi of Finland, with whom I had the pleasure of working — also contributed to the successful conclusion of the work of the Fourth Committee.

I should also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Chen Jian of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services for his leadership of the Secretariat staff who provided invaluable assistance to the Bureau.

I should also like to place on record our appreciation for the able and efficient cooperation provided by Ms. Lesley Wilkinson, Secretary of the Committee, and her very competent team from the Secretariat. It was through their efforts that the work of the Committee always proceeded smoothly and in an atmosphere of genuine cordiality and efficiency. We are indeed grateful to them for ensuring that we completed our work in a timely fashion despite a number of time constraints.

Now I have the honour to submit to the General Assembly for its consideration and adoption the recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee contained in the reports in documents A/56/547 to A/56/557.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the

Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified to the contrary in advance. This means that where recorded votes were taken, we will do the same. I should also hope that we will proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Agenda item 85

Effects of atomic radiation

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/547)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/50).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 85?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 86

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/548)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/51).

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Brazil, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Cordeiro (Brazil): Brazil joined the consensus on the resolution just adopted, and we support its general thrust. However, we want to express our reservation with regard to the Spanish version of the resolution's second preambular paragraph and, more specifically, with regard to the language that characterizes outer space as the common heritage of all mankind.

Let me note that, in the part of the resolution where the English text reads "the province of all mankind", there is a clear disconnection between the Spanish version and the texts in English, French and the other languages.

We believe that the concept of outer space as the common heritage of all mankind has not been accepted, and that it needs further discussion before its introduction into United Nations resolutions can be considered. As long as there is no consensus on such a concept, we believe that the Spanish version of the second preambular paragraph should reflect the language of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which is known as the Outer Space Treaty.

We note in this regard that the English and French versions of the second preambular paragraph of the resolution just adopted are in line with the language of the Outer Space Treaty. It is only the Spanish version that deviates from it.

That said, I wish to reaffirm Brazil's support for the activities of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 86?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 87

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (A/56/549)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the seven draft resolutions recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 22 of its report. After all the votes have been taken, representatives will again have an opportunity to explain their vote.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Assistance to Palestine refugees".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Draft resolution I was adopted by 151 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/52).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/53).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of).

Draft resolution III was adopted by 151 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/54).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for Palestine refugees".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan,

Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Israel

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 154 votes to none, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/55).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution V was adopted by 151 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/56).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution VI is entitled "Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution VI was adopted by 150 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/57).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution VII is entitled "University of Jerusalem 'Al-Quds' for Palestine refugees".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, United States of America

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution VII was adopted by 151 votes to 3, with 1 abstention (resolution 56/58).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 87?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 88

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/550)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 22 of its report. After all the votes have been taken, representatives will have the opportunity to explain their vote.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution I was adopted by 83 votes to 4, with 58 abstentions (resolution 56/59).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France,

Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Angola, Nicaragua

Draft resolution II was adopted by 148 votes to 4, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/60).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: draft resolution III is entitled "Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands

Draft resolution III was adopted by 145 votes to 4, with 3 abstentions (resolution 56/61).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Israeli practices affecting the human rights of

the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 145 votes to 4, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/62).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution V is entitled "The occupied Syrian Golan".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania,

Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of), Nicaragua, United States of America

Draft resolution I was adopted by 147 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 56/63).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Ovia (Papua New Guinea): Papua New Guinea's position on the question of the right to self-determination is well known in this Assembly, and I do not need to repeat it. It is reflected in Papua New Guinea's affirmative votes in the past. However, as we have all decided, peace cannot be achieved through continued violence, such has been witnessed in the past several months, especially the past two weeks, in the Middle East region. As a Melanesian country — and, for that matter, as a Pacific island country — we believe in negotiation and discussion to resolve any differences with our adversaries, as that is the best and only way to bring peace in any conflict.

Papua New Guinea continues to believe that Israel must recognize the right of the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to the resulting statehood. We also believe, however, that Israel has a right to coexist in a safe and secure environment with its neighbours. As such, the State of Israel must be assured of its right to exist within safe and secure borders. Papua New Guinea also believes in the purposes of the United Nations, as outlined in its Charter.

Unless the United Nations takes action under Chapter VII of the Charter on every other occasion, it must be seen to be impartial in its dealings with all parties to a conflict. It must not be seen to be taking a position that can be interpreted as pre-empting the outcome of any negotiations.

Papua New Guinea believes in the sanctity of life, whether Israeli or Palestinian. It is wrong to commit suicide or to use one's own body as a weapon of destruction. Extrajudicial killings also have no place in a civilized society that is founded on the rule of law. By the same token, we are concerned about the implementation of the rule of law, and governance generally, inside Palestinian-controlled areas. Peaceful coexistence requires the genuine desire of all parties to the conflict to cooperate for such an outcome. There cannot be a peaceful outcome when there are elements in the conflict that do not recognize the right of Israel to exist within secure borders. These matters are not properly reflected in resolutions 56/59, 56/61 and 56/62. We therefore abstained in the voting on those resolutions.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 88?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 89

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/551)

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) contained in document A/56/551?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 89.

Agenda item 90

Questions relating to information

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)
(A/56/552)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it draft resolutions A and B recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and a draft decision recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

I should like to inform members that action on draft resolution B is postponed to a later date to allow time for the review of its programme budget implications by the Fifth Committee. The Assembly will take action on draft resolution B as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on its programme budget implications is available.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A, entitled "Information in the service of humanity".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution A without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution A was adopted (resolution 56/64 A).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now turn to the draft decision entitled "Increase in the membership of the Committee on Information".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 90.

Agenda item 91

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)
(A/56/553)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian

Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

France, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The draft resolution was adopted by 149 votes to none, with 6 abstentions (resolution 56/65).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 91?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 92 and 18

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)
(A/56/554)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 9 of its report and the draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 10 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

France, Georgia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The draft resolution was adopted by 147 votes to 2, with 5 abstentions (resolution 56/66).

The Acting President: We now turn to the draft decision entitled "Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

The draft decision was adopted by 92 votes to 51.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Botswana, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Peru informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 92?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 18.

Agenda items 93 and 12

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/555)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia,

Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yugoslavia

The draft resolution was adopted by 106 votes to none, with 50 abstentions (resolution 56/67).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 93?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The Assembly has concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 94

Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/556)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 56/68).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 94?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 18

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/56/557)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the four draft resolutions recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 20 of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Committee in paragraph 21 of the same report.

We turn first to the four draft resolutions contained in paragraph 20 of the report.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Question of Western Sahara".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 56/69).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Question of New Caledonia".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 56/70).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Question of Tokelau".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 56/71).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 56/72).

The Acting President: We turn now to the draft decision, contained in paragraph 21 of the report, entitled "Question of Gibraltar".

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 18.

Agenda item 18 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/56/23, Part III)

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/56/61, A/56/65 and A/56/159)

Draft resolutions (A/56/23 (Part III), chap. XIII, sect. G, para. 7; A/56/L.40)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution contained in part III, chapter XIII, section G, paragraph 7, of document A/56/23, and draft resolution A/56/L.40.

Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Hybl (United States of America): The United States is fully supportive when countries choose independence and is proud to work with them on an equal and sovereign basis. For Territories that do not choose independence, however, the United States also supports the right of people in those Territories to a full measure of self-government, if that is what they choose. The United States reaffirms its respect for their rights, which include the options of integration and free association. Given the vast variety of people, places and political circumstances that exist around the world, we believe that a single standard of decolonization should not be applied to every Territory, and we call on all Member States to respect the choices made by the residents of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

In that regard, the United States cannot support the draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The draft resolution unfairly applies a single and narrow standard for decolonization. Indeed, for the United States, the term "non-self-governing" is of questionable applicability to those who are able to establish their own constitution, who elect their own public officers, who have representation in Washington, and who choose their own economic path.

Moreover, the United States cannot agree with the implication in the draft resolution that the mere presence of military activities and bases in the Non-Self-Governing Territories is harmful to the rights and

interests of the people of the Territories. We cannot support language that would infringe on the sovereign right of the United States Government to plan its military activities in accordance with its national security interests.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will first take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Dissemination of information on decolonization", which is contained in part III, chapter XIII, section G, paragraph 7, of the report of the Special Committee.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

France, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

The draft resolution was adopted by 147 votes to 2, with 4 abstentions (resolution 56/73).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.40, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland,

Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey

Draft resolution A/56/L.40 was adopted by 132 votes to 2, with 21 abstentions (resolution 56/74).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Schelstraete (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the European Union to explain the Union's position concerning the resolution on the question of Western Sahara.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country belonging to the European Economic Area, Norway, align themselves with this explanation of position.

The European Union is pleased that the resolution on Western Sahara has once again been presented this year as a proposal of the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, and that it has been adopted by consensus.

The European Union continues to pay close attention to the question of Western Sahara. It welcomed the provisions of Security Council resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001. The European Union fully supports the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker, in their tireless efforts to contribute to a fair, sustainable and negotiated resolution of the dispute.

In its resolution 1359 (2001), the Security Council clearly indicated the path to be followed. It has invited all the parties to meet under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General to discuss the draft Framework Agreement and to negotiate any changes they would like to see to that proposal, as well as to discuss any other proposal for a political solution which may be put forward by the parties in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable settlement. Resolution 1359 (2001) also envisages that the official proposals submitted by the Polisario Front to overcome the obstacles preventing the implementation of the Settlement Plan would be considered while those discussions are taking place.

The European Union encourages the parties to participate constructively in the talks in progress under the auspices of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy.

There is no need to await the end of those talks before settling certain pressing humanitarian issues, such as the exchange of family visits. Under international law, the parties are obliged to release without delay all prisoners of war still in detention.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute once again to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). MINURSO continues to play a crucial role in the Western Saharan peace process.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): I should like to explain the United Kingdom's votes on the draft resolutions on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and on the dissemination of information on decolonization. As the Assembly will have seen, the United Kingdom voted against both of these resolutions.

The United Kingdom continues to find some elements of the text on the implementation of the Declaration unacceptable. These elements include, but are not limited to, operative paragraph 12, which calls on the administering Powers to eliminate the remaining military bases in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. This language is drawn from the military activities decision, which we also voted against this year.

With regard to the resolution on the dissemination of information on decolonization, the United Kingdom remains of the view that the obligation that this text places on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represents an unwarranted drain on the scarce resources of the United Nations. The resolution is therefore unacceptable to the United Kingdom.

Despite our negative votes on these resolutions, the United Kingdom delegation remains sincerely committed to furthering the process of informal dialogue with the Committee of 24 over the coming year.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

Ms. Thomas (Jamaica): I will not prolong the debate, but I should like to make a few remarks on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Group is pleased that it has been able to participate in the deliberations on agenda items 18, 12, and 85 to 94 during the past three and a half months in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. In this regard, we thank the Rapporteur for his reports, and we also would note that this year's deliberations were marked by a spirit of camaraderie, which permeated our discussions.

This year, our deliberations were threatened by the events of 11 September. Despite this, the Committee forged ahead, committed in its resolve not to be daunted by the acts of terrorism, and successfully completed its work by mid-November.

We especially pay tribute to Ambassador Hasmy of Malaysia, Chairman of the Fourth Committee, for his hard work in steering the proceedings of the Committee. For the most part, he conducted proceedings single-handedly, due to the absence of an elected Bureau. We thank Ambassador Hasmy for his initiative in recommending a system of rotation, which will now determine the future membership of the Bureau.

Finally, once again, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States will continue to remain engaged in the work of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

Mr. Graveley (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): With respect to the draft decision on military activities and arrangements adopted by administering Powers in territories under their administration, as contained in document A/56/23, part III, my delegation, which had voted against the draft decision by mistake in the Fourth Committee, decided to rectify its error and vote in favour at this plenary meeting.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 18.

Again, I wish to express my thanks to all of the people who make this look so easy. Believe me, it is not because of my talents; it is because of their support.

Today we won the Nobel Peace Prize, and I think it is well deserved.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.